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Subject: BNA-2-12-14 House Democrats Urge EPA to Expedite Agricultural Worker Protection Rule
Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2014 4:36:44 PM
Attachments: [wps letter from 51 House Democrats 2-12-14.pdf](#)

House Democrats Urge EPA to Expedite Agricultural Worker Protection Rule

Posted February 12, 2014, 3:54 P.M. ET

A coalition of 51 House Democrats called on the Environmental Protection Agency to finalize revisions to the agricultural worker protection standard by the end of fiscal year 2014.

The representatives, in a [letter](#) sent to the EPA Feb. 11 by Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.), urged agency leadership to “expeditiously finalize” rulemaking that would revise the federal worker protection standard to improve agricultural workers’ ability to protect themselves from potential pesticide exposure.

The agricultural worker protection standard is a set of federal regulations designed to protect farm workers from risks associated with working with or near pesticides.

The rule, which is still under review, is intended to increase workers’ ability to mitigate potential exposures to pesticides, bring EPA’s hazard communication requirements for farm workers in line with Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements and improve required pesticide safety training, according to OMB’s website.

The EPA submitted a proposed rule to revise the federal worker protection regulations found at 40 C.F.R. pt. 170 to the White House Office of Management and Budget in October (209 DEN A-4, 10/29/13)

The EPA did not respond to a Feb. 12 request for comment on the letter and the status of its proposed rule to revise the worker protection standard.

The letter said that the EPA needs to have “strong protections” in place to mitigate farm worker exposure to the estimated 1.1 billion pounds of pesticides that are applied to agricultural crops in the U.S. each year. The EPA estimates that between 10,000 and 20,000 agricultural workers suffer from pesticide poisoning annually, according to the letter.

The representatives said the current version of the worker protection standard is “limited and insufficient” for farm workers.

The letter was sent to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy; Jim Jones, assistant administrator for chemical safety and pollution prevention; Steve Bradbury, director of the Office of Pesticide Programs; and other officials with the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention.